

Remarks at a Fundraiser in North Miami Beach

September 19, 1995

The President. Thank you. This is the quietest this has been all night. [Laughter]

Audience member. Four more years, Mr. President!

The President. Thank you. I want to thank Governor Chiles and Lieutenant Governor MacKay and your attorney general and the other State officials, the State legislators and local officials and others who are here. Mostly, I just want to thank all of you for coming here to support our candidacy.

This has been a wonderful day in Florida for me. I started the morning in Jacksonville with the sheriff there, looking at some police officers who were hired under our crime bill who have already contributed to lowering the crime rate on the streets of Jacksonville. And then I flew down to North Miami Beach and had a wonderful meeting with some senior citizens about Medicare and Medicaid. And then I came on here.

I know that this is sort of a festive occasion. You're all packed in like sardines in a can, and we're all standing up instead of sitting down. And I won't keep you here very long, but I want you to understand that as profoundly grateful as we are to you for your contributions to this campaign and to all of you who did so much to organize this event, it is even more important that you make a personal commitment tonight to do what you can to make sure that we carry the State of Florida next November.

And the Vice President was talking to you about some of the things that are important. This administration has been good for Florida. We've tried to be good to Florida, and our general policies have helped the economy in Florida. We have also fought against those things that we thought would hurt you. We have represented your State in our Cabinet. We have tried to be sensitive to your concerns. We are trying to work through this budget process in a way that will be fair to the incredible diversity and richness and growth that is Florida.

I feel deeply, personally committed to you because of the fact that I have family members here, my wife's brothers, Hugh and

Tony, and their wives, Maria and Nicole. And now I have a little nephew whom I was just holding upstairs. He doesn't think I'm too charismatic. He goes to sleep every time I pick him up. And because our campaign—my campaign really got started here in December of 1991 at the Florida Democratic caucus—first election I ever won in the Presidential campaign.

But more importantly, we all got a big stake in the future, and a great deal of how we live for the next 20 years will be determined by the outcome of this Presidential election. So let me try just in a couple of minutes, after which the Vice President and I will come down and try to finish shaking hands with everybody and visit and laugh, just ask you to take a couple of minutes to be serious about what is at stake here.

When I ran for President in 1992 and I asked Al Gore to join with me to form what is clearly the most unique partnership between a President and a Vice President in American history—Al Gore is clearly the most influential, effective, important Vice President in the history of the United States of America. We basically agreed that we were in a time of profound change and that we needed a clear vision of the future. We needed a commitment to new ideas. We needed a commitment to old-fashioned American values. We needed a commitment to seeking common ground to going beyond the kind of partisan politics that is eating Washington, DC, alive. And maybe most important of all, we needed to be willing to do what is right for the future of this country, even if it's unpopular in the short run. And that is exactly what we have tried to do in Washington for the last 2½ years.

My vision is that in the 21st century this country will be a high-opportunity place, where we are growing entrepreneurs and growing the middle class and shrinking the under class, where we have good schools and good health care systems and safe streets and a clean environment, where people have the opportunity to make the most of their own lives, and families and communities have a chance to solve their own problems, and America is a force for freedom and prosperity and peace throughout the world. That is my vision.

To achieve that, we need old-fashioned values: freedom and responsibility, work and family, community, excellence, accountability, and a real devotion to the American dream, and a willingness to stand up for this country. But to get there we need some new ideas. We can't keep doing business as usual. That's the only reason I ran for President in 1992.

We are going through a period of change as profound as anything that's happened in this country in a hundred years. This is like when we moved from being a rural agricultural country into being an industrial urbanized country. Now we're going from being an industrial economy to a high-technology information-based economy. We're going from the cold war relationships in our global foreign policy to a global economy, where we're becoming integrated economically and there are all kinds of pressures for disintegration—disintegration of families, of communities, of national economic policy—and the growth of extremism all over the world, political and religious and ethnic extremism. You know it. You see it when a bus blows up in Israel. You see it when radicals run for office or stop elections in other, secular Islamic countries. You see it when the sarin gas explodes in the subway in Japan or when, God forbid, the Federal building blows up in Oklahoma City.

So this is a confusing world. There's a lot of wonderful things happening and a lot of troubling things happening. We cannot continue to do things the way we always did.

Our administration has a clear economic policy for this global economy, reduce the deficit, but increase our investment in people, in education, in technology, in research, in things that will grow the economy. Look at the places that are left behind. Help the places who need help because of defense cutbacks. Help the places who need incentives for people to invest in inner cities and rural areas. And don't forget that the people come first.

What are the results? In 2½ years, the good news is, 7 million jobs, 2½ million homeowners, 2 million new businesses, a record number of self-made millionaires, the stock market's at 4,700, corporate profits at an all-time high. But guess what? The me-

dian income has dropped one percent. Why? Because we still have a lot of people who can't do very well in this new global economy. And I'm telling you, go back to our values. Everything we do—everything we do has to be directed toward helping people who are willing to work hard and do their best to be good workers, good parents, and successful in this global economy. That's what we have to do.

Look at our social problems. Believe it or not—you couldn't tell it maybe from the daily press, but in this country in the last 2 years, the crime rate is down, the murder rate is down, the people on welfare's numbers are down, the food stamp rolls are down. The divorce rate is down. Even the abortion rate is down. But we still have some terrible problems. Why? Because young people feel like nobody's looking out for their future. The juvenile crime rate is up. Casual drug use among people under 18 is up. And so we have to find ways to work together.

That's what our crime bill was all about that the people in Congress are trying to undo. We put 100,000 police on the street, not just to catch criminals but to prevent crime and to give our young people some role models and some people they could relate to, people who would be standing up for their future and telling them there are things you ought to be saying yes to as well as saying no to crime and violence and drugs. And we need to do more of that, not less. We need a different approach that recognizes that we have to do both things.

Today, finally, the Senate moved away from partisan extremism and 87 people voted in the Senate, 87 of 100, for a welfare reform bill that has the elements that I've been advocating now for 2½ years. It encourages work. It provides child care for people on welfare so they can go to work without worrying their hearts out about their kids. And it is very tough in collecting child support that is owed by people; even if they cross State lines, you ought not to be able to run away from the obligation to take care of your own children. That's what we did today.

The point I want to make about all this is that we need to try new and different approaches. And when we do, we can get results. When we fall back into these old pat-

terns of turning everything in Washington into a partisan fight, all it does is turn the American people off and doesn't do a single, solitary thing to move the American people into the future.

Now we have a chance with this budget to find real common ground. I want to balance the budget. The leaders of the Democratic Party want to balance the budget. I have presented a balanced budget plan. But the question is, can we balance the budget consistent with our values and with these new ideas? Why are we balancing the budget? To take the debt off these kids here, to free up money to be borrowed at lower interest rates, to create jobs, to stop spending your tax money paying interest on the debt and start spending it educating our children or taking care of our health needs or fighting crime. That's why we want to balance the budget.

Therefore, I say to you, I don't have to take a back seat to them in balancing the budget. When I took office—I've only been in Washington 2½ years—and most of them had been here forever and a day, and we cut the deficit from \$290 billion to \$160 billion in 3 years. I want to do it.

But I do not believe that the way to cut the deficit is to cut the number of children in Head Start, cut the number of young people in national service, increase the cost of student loans. That is wrong. That is cutting off our nose to spite our face. Cutting the education budget today would be like cutting the defense budget at the height of the cold war. In the global economy, education is our national security weapon, and we dare not cut it.

Al Gore has done a lot to give this country a different kind of Government. You heard him say we've cut the size of the Government, we've abolished 16,000 pages of regulation. Carol Browner from Florida, running the EPA, has cut by 25 percent the paperwork burdens of the EPA. But I'll be darned if I think the way to move into the global economy is to wreck the environment or the public health of this country in the name of balancing the budget. That is not necessary, and it is not right.

I've already said, I was up in Jacksonville with the magnificent sheriff there talking

about the crime bill today. There are those who say in the name of balancing the budget, they want to stop the effort to put 100,000 police on the street and send less money in the form of a blank check to local governments. I say we know how to lower the crime rate; there is no constituency in America for raising the crime rate. Why in the wide world would we seek to balance the budget in ways that will raise the crime rate when we know how to lower it? Let's keep lowering the crime rate, put the police on the street, put the prevention programs out there, put the prison programs out there. Let's don't wreck the crime bill. Let's keep bringing the crime rate down.

I'll give you just two other ideas that are out there to balance the budget. One of the most important things we did that we got next to no credit for in 1993 was cutting the taxes of 15 million working families with 50 million Americans in them, including 10 times as many people in Florida as paid a tax increase. The reason for this was very simple in my mind. I really believed the biggest problem in America today is the stagnant wages of middle-class people who are working harder for less. I really want people to go to work off welfare. I believe if you tell people you want them to work, work has to pay.

Most parents today have to work. We have no higher duty than to make sure that people who work and have children can be both successful at work and successful in the raising of their children, our most important job.

So what do we do? We expanded the family tax credit to give all those people a tax cut so there would never be an incentive to be on welfare. What do they want to do in Washington? They want to raise taxes on the lowest income working people and give everybody else a tax cut. It doesn't make sense; that is not the way to balance the budget.

And finally, let's talk about Medicare and Medicaid. The discussion has appalled me in Washington. The people who are proposing \$450 billion worth of cuts in Medicare and Medicaid act like if you're not for their plan, you don't want to save the Medicare Trust Fund; if you're not for their plan, you must be some greedy, wealthy older person who just doesn't want to pay your fair share.

Let me tell you something, folks. One of the most important decisions we have to make as we change this economy is what our obligations to each other are. Lawton Chiles said we needed a country that's a community, not a crowd. Are we going to be a community or a crowd? Are we going to define ourselves by what we can do together, or what we can do cut alone as a bunch of isolated individuals?

Now, the truth is that most elderly people in this country are more than willing to do what's right, have already done what's right all their lives and care a great deal about the welfare of their children and their grandchildren and the future of this country. And it is a bum rap to say that those of us who have questions about whether we should just jerk \$450 billion out of Medicare and Medicaid don't want to balance the budget and don't care about our country. That is not true, and it is not necessary to balance the budget.

I want you to tell people that. When you hear people say we've got to cut all this money out of Medicare because of the Trust Fund, you just remember one thing: Not one red cent that senior citizens pay in medical bills will go into that Trust Fund, not a penny. It's all going to fund the budget program and the tax cut. Don't ever forget it.

So I say to you, let's balance the budget, but let's do it in a way that reflects our shared values and what we owe to each other. We can balance the budget without cutting education. We can balance the budget without endangering the environment. We can balance the budget without letting the crime rate go up again, and we can certainly balance the budget, slow the rate of health care inflation, fix the Medicare Trust Fund without soaking the elderly people of this country, 75 percent of whom are struggling to get by today on less than \$24,000 a year. We can do these things.

The last thing I want to tell you is—I thought about it today a lot because I was up in Jacksonville—if you are President of the United States at a time when everything is kind of going haywire and changing, you cannot always do what is popular and be right. Sometimes you have to do what's going to be right in 10 or 20 years. That's what you have to do.

Now, I am well aware that I hurt myself terribly in north Florida when I became the first President in the history of the United States, while he was in office as opposed to after he left, to say to the National Rifle Association, "You are wrong about the Brady bill. You are wrong about assault weapons. We need to make our children safer." I'm aware of that.

And believe you me, I am aware that every political adviser I had said, "Look at the States you won last time. You're crazy if you take on the tobacco companies over teenage smoking." But I tell you, folks, 3,000 children a day begin to smoke, and 1,000 of them every day will shorten their lives because of doing that. And I say who cares what the political consequences are if we save 1,000 lives a day from now on. It is worth doing. It is worth doing.

When I sent the United States military to liberate Haiti from its dictators, everybody said I was crazy; there was no political support for it in the country; it was impossible. But I said the United States was promised by those military dictators that they would go. They gave their word to us, and we must keep our word for freedom's sake. We did, and we were right. Unpopular, yes. Right, yes. You have to do what's right over the long run.

I'll give you a more mundane example. When the Vice President and I decided to invest massive amounts of his time and the most talented people we could find to work in the White House to reinvent the Government, my political advisers said, "This is nuts. No President has ever made a single vote on management. No one will ever believe the Government runs well anyway. No one will ever believe the Government gets smaller anyway."

Well, let me tell you something, folks: That may all be true, but we cannot do what we need to do for the United States in the new information age unless we have a smaller, less bureaucratic, more efficient, less costly, better Government. So it's going to be the smallest it's been since John Kennedy, and it's going to put out twice as much output, and we're going to have more examples like the Small Business Administration where we cut the budget by 40 percent and doubled the

loan volume to create small business in America. You're going to have a lot of that. There may not be any votes in it, but it's the right thing for America.

When I stuck up for the elemental principle that we should reform affirmative action because there were some problems with it but that there was still discrimination in this country, and we ought to reach out and try to make sure everybody was considered without regard to their gender or their racial or ethnic background, not given quotas, not given reverse discrimination, but at least given consideration for equal opportunity, I was told, "This is dumb politics. Look at the polls. You're crazy." All I know is, look around this room. We're going up or down together, folks. Our ethnic diversity is the greatest resource we have if we use it in a sensible way. So we should amend affirmative action but not end it.

The Vice President said something I'm really proud of. He will tell you, we were told by expert after expert after expert about politics that the First Lady should not go to China. They said, "Oh, it's a no-win deal. If you go over there, people that are concerned about human rights will attack her and attack you. And whatever you say, if you say anything strong, well, you'll put our relationship haywire. It's a lose-lose deal." But you know what? Somebody needs to speak up on behalf of the United States for the principles of freedom and liberty and decent treatment for women here at home and throughout the world. What happens to women and little girls throughout the world will have a great deal to do with the world we live in. And I'm proud of what she did, and we did the right thing to send her there.

Well, you get the idea. So what I want you to do is to go out of here and say, "Look, you may not agree with everything Bill Clinton and Al Gore do." [Laughter] "I don't agree with everything Bill Clinton and Al Gore do. They make mistakes. But you've got to give them one thing: they've got a clear vision of what they want America to look like; they've got new ideas and old values; they are committed to working with Democrats and Republicans to find common ground based on those values; and they're doing what's right for the next generation, even if

it is politically unpopular, and in a time of change, that's what we've got to do."

I want you to take that out to every person in Florida. We need to win Florida. But more importantly, America needs to stay on the right course: more jobs, higher incomes, safer streets, a cleaner environment, an opportunity to lead in a world that is safer and better, and to come together. If we do that, the best is yet to be.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. in the Sheraton Bal Harbour. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on House Action To Reauthorize the Ryan White CARE Act

September 19, 1995

I congratulate the Members of the House of Representatives on their overwhelming vote to approve a 5-year reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act. This legislation will assure that Americans who are living with HIV and AIDS will continue to receive the life-sustaining services that they need. The Ryan White CARE Act is a lifeline to thousands of Americans who otherwise have nowhere to turn. I hope the House and Senate can quickly work out their differences on this legislation and send me a final bill as soon as possible.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at the Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged in Denver, Colorado

September 20, 1995

The President. The reason I wanted to come here today is because by coming I hope to honor the work that this home has done and also to point out how dramatically our Nation has been able to improve care for elderly people in the last several years because of the commitments we have made through the Medicare and Medicaid program.

And as you know, there's a big debate in Washington going on now about balancing the budget and what we have to do to balance